

Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc.

SIX MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

February 25, 2019

Prepared by Sandra E. Tripp-Jones, Interim Executive Director

Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc. (CWDI) is **a partnership** of the City of Cambridge, Dorchester County and the State of Maryland. The City and County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in spring of 2018, committing to the creation **of a non-profit corporation to develop the waterfront property** known as the port property (about 10 acres), owned by the City, the current hospital property (about 15 acres) owned by University of Maryland Shore Regional Health (UM SRH), and potentially the park (about 4 acres), owned by the County, that includes the amphitheater, beach and playground.

All three entities have representatives on the Board of Directors and contribute to the operating costs of CWDI. The CWDI Board of Directors has 7 members appointed by Cambridge City Council, Dorchester County, Sailwinds Park, Inc. (nominee) and Maryland Governor Hogan. Together, the members offer backgrounds in development and community planning. They include:

- Richard Zeidman, President – retired attorney with Linowes and Blocher, LLC (City appointee)
- Daryl Butcher – retired developer (City appointee)
- Jeff Powell – realtor, former County Council member, and Board Member of Sailwinds Park, Inc. (County appointee)
- Frank Narr, local insurance company executive, Sailwinds Park Inc. Board Member and former Executive Director of Sailwinds Park, Inc. (nominee of Sailwinds Park, Inc.)
- Michael Frenz, Executive Director of the Maryland Stadium Authority (Governor's appointee)
- Patrick Comiskey, City Manager
- Donna Lane, Acting County Manager.

The corporation is staffed by Sandra Tripp-Jones, Interim Executive Director and former Cambridge City Manager and Charles (Chip) MacLeod, Esq. as Counsel to the Board. A search for a permanent Executive Director is close to conclusion.

The Board first met in September 2018 and is now in its 6th month of operations. Its work has focused on: 1) organizational set up; 2) understanding the history and background of the project; 3) meeting with and understanding interests of

neighboring company and organizations; and 4) determining CWDI's approach to attracting a developer or developers.

The organizational set up work has included clarifying that the Board will do its business in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act. This means that agendas of meetings are published on the City and County websites; that meetings are open to the public unless closed pursuant to the Open Meetings Act exceptions; that minutes are approved and made available to the public. Other organizational accomplishments include finalization of current year budget (\$160,000) and submission of a proposed budget for FY2020 to the City, County and State of Maryland (\$219,000). A recruitment for the permanent Executive Director is underway and will close Feb. 28th. Document management on an internal website has also been established.

On October 18, 2018, the Board received presentations from Sailwinds Park, Inc., the former City Economic Development Director, the Mayor and City Public Works Director, Interim Executive Director Sandra Tripp-Jones, and Charles MacLeod, Counsel to the Board. The Board heard comments from Commissioner Hanson, from then County Council Board President Ricky Travers, and from State Senator Addie Eckhardt on the history of the project and City, County and State perspectives. Key documents such as the property transfer agreements with the State of Maryland Department of Transportation and the City Comprehensive Plan – including the Waterfront 2020 vision - were provided to each member. This comprehensive grounding has helped the Board understand the legal requirements and community expectations for the project.

Meetings/discussions have been held with George Robinson, owner of Cambridge Yacht Maintenance, representatives of the Richardson Foundation, Ken Kozel, President/CEO of the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health, and with doctor/owners of properties adjacent to the hospital. The purpose was to understand their future plans and enlist cooperation with CWDI's development efforts. One specific outcome is CWDI's official support of expansion of Cambridge Yacht Maintenance to Hayward Street. Another is renewal of negotiations with UM SRH for acquisition of the hospital property by March 2021. CWDI intends to remain in contact with neighbors to keep them informed of our progress and to explore areas of cooperation.

Determining how CWDI will proceed with attracting developers has involved exploration of strategies, including using a broker, issuing our own RFP, and combining informal contacts with potential developers and with people in contact with developers. At this time, our strategy is to both make informal contacts for interest and for input and to modify the City's RFP to include the hospital property and acceptability of phased development by more than one developer. CWDI also

requested the assistance of Sailwinds Park, Inc. in developing a site activation plan to demonstrate the attractiveness of the site for recreational and education uses. Sailwinds Park, Inc. is considering this partnership. CWDI is targeting May or June for a release of a formal RFP. Meanwhile, contacts are being made with potential developers for interest and feedback. CWDI is committed to public review of plans but is not ready yet to define how. Both the State and the City will require development plans in order to approve the project(s). Planning and Zoning Commission will have usual authority and responsibility for approval of development plans.

The State has assisted this project in a number of ways. The State owns the Visitor Center and fishing pier; they are expected to be incorporated into the overall configuration of the site. Maryland Department of Transportation sold the port property (about 12 acres) to the City for \$5 dollars, with the conditions that it be developed as a mixed use economic develop project. The State provided most of the funding for the wharf repair and public promenade. The State funded acquisition and demolition of the Gateway at Route 50 and Maryland Avenue, which may be incorporated into the development configuration and serve as an attractive entry into Cambridge and the new project.

More recently, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has declared the waterfront development as one of its three major priorities in Cambridge, the other 2 being Pine Street housing revitalization and the Packing Plant historic restoration. The State has provided some grant funds for technical assistance. Governor Hogan, with federal approval, designated census tracts in Dorchester as Opportunity Fund zones, including the one that includes the waterfront. The Cambridge Waterfront Development project is listed on the State's Opportunity Zones Information Exchange site. This has the potential for attracting private investors. The State is actively promoting the waterfront development as an investment opportunity.

Over the next six months, CWDI's expects to:

- Hire its permanent Executive Director;
- Introduce the site to potential developers;
- Finalize an RFP, including clarification of the area planning envelope and development parcels;
- Negotiate with the City, County and UM SRH, an acquisition agreement for the hospital property.